

Life?
Don't Get Me Started!!!

Written by Steve J Waterfield

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY DEAR WIFE JACKIE, WHO HAS PUT UP WITH MY GRUMPY MOODS WITH GREAT PATIENCE, GOOD HUMOUR AND EQUANIMITY FOR THE BEST PART OF FORTY YEARS.



Jackie Waterfield Painted by Steve J Waterfield

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the work in this book is rather different from that in my previous books, which contain mostly lyrical, romantic and quasi-spiritual poetry. They have had a timeless quality which could set them in any society at any time. There are only a few such poems in this book.

Most of the poems offered here are edgier, less refined and more whimsical. They are set firmly in today's society. I have also made use of more vernacular language and some slang. There are occasionally, some mild profanities - something I have assiduously avoided in the past but which work well in this context. I have also reintroduced a few old poems here as they fit in perfectly with the rest of the set.

My previous work has mostly, not been autobiographical. It has been an imaginative rendering of the feelings that other people might have in various situations. But in this book the opinions expressed are largely my own, although occasionally I have embellished them with widely held views. A few of the comments aren't literally true. For instance I haven't got a brother and I get on very well with my in-laws! (See *Bah Humbug*).

Many of the poems range from the tongue in cheek and whimsical to overt, fairly political comment. I don't suppose that everyone that reads this book will agree with everything I have said, but nevertheless I hope that I have hit a lot of nails right on the head. I have wanted to fire a few shots at the venality, stupidity, incompetence, bad manners and political correctness that I see every day.

My general theme is of grumpy rants. I recently came to realize that being grumpy is something I have some expertise in since I am grumpy a lot of the time! I also wanted to create a document that illustrates the typical issues and tensions that afflict contemporary British society.

The book also comprises a bouquet of other poems, some addressing deeply philosophical questions and a few dedicated to my loved ones.

All the images used in the book have been produced by me, either as paintings or photographs. In some cases the paintings were derived from internet downloads, which I selected with great care and then used as the basis for my original artwork. In such cases I cannot claim the original concept or design (see illustrations section for details). The pictures are intended to complement the meaning of the texts.

I would like to record my thanks for the help provided by my friends, Hans-Jörg Küller Rabaça and Helena Rabaça Küller, who provided a great sounding board for many of the more contentious poems.

Steve J Waterfield

MURPHY'S LAW

It rains on a wedding, a fete or parade.
The best deal is found when you've just bought and paid.
If flush you can borrow, if skint then, no way!
The telly goes west when it's cup final day.
The phone always rings when you're stuck in the shower.
The rain always starts once you get out the mower.
The falling toast always lands jam to the floor.
Your favourite show? Someone comes to the door.
You get a sore throat on the day of your speech.
The thing that you want is just where you can't reach.
The warranty's out? Then the goods will break down.
The girl that you met's from the wrong side of town.
When you're behind time, then the trains will run slow.
When winter's just started, the boiler will blow.
The boss will turn up when you just left your station.
The freezer will fail when you're on your vacation.
The place you can't scratch is the place where it itches.
The girls that you love all turn out to be bitches.
If you miss the kick off your team's sure to score.
The suit you just bought is the one that you tore.
The file you don't save is the one that's corrupted.
The best sex for years always gets interrupted.
The courier comes when you're out for a tick,
but if you stay in, then they don't. ... makes me sick!
The rear wheel goes flat on your bike. What a pain!
And it only does that in the mud and the rain.
It's always late Friday the job goes kaput.
The hammer you drop always lands on your foot.
The clothes in the sale are all the wrong sizes.
The guy that did nothing will get all the prizes.
The life changing letter gets lost in the Post.
You ball always hits you where it hurts the most.
That Murphy's a pain –he's caused problems galore.
But I needn't to tell you! You've been there I'm sure!

MARRIAGE VOW

May I be your comfort and your calm.
May I protect you from all harm.
May all the joys I have be yours.
May all your hopes become my cause.
May I make all your burdens light.
May you be always in my sight.
May I be the pillow for your head.
May I be your fountain and your bread.
May I spread all your paths with flowers.
May every dream you dream be ours.
May all our waters run with wine.
And may your tender heart be mine



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

ROAD RAGE



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

Come on mate! Let me out. Give me a break!
You've blocked the bloody way for heaven's sake!
You see that yellow box there? What's it for?
Just use your noddle next time or it's war!

At last! No! Now it's all the other way!
At this rate I'll be sitting here all day.
First it's all one way and then the other!
I'll shove out quick-it's that or just don't bother.

What now? Some cheeky beggar's pushing in!
I'll soon put paid to that-he'll never win!
He'll lose that game you'll see. I'll just keep tight....
just squeeze him out-and that'll serve him right!

,

‘Turn right’, ‘turn left’, ‘turn right’. Make up your mind!
The Sat’ Nav’s useless - must have been designed
by some bloke who has never seen a map.
It’s sending me in circles - load of pap!

Oi! Nearly took my mirror off you Pratt!
Bloody bikers! If he keeps on like that
he’s not long for this world, you take my word.
He just gave me the finger! Lousy turd!

Stone me! That Renault’s nearly in my boot!
Tailgaters! If I had my way we’d shoot
the flipping lot! I’ll slam the brakes on hard.
That’ll make him think - the bloody retard!

That did the trick! That always works I find...
He stopped so sharp he pranged the car behind!
Oops! That’s not meant to happen. Bloody Hell!
The one behind was tailing him as well!

Now check this out - coming the other way.
No headlights on - as if it were mid-day,
not nine o’clock at night. No police you see....
They’re all down at the station drinking tea!

Right concentrate! We’re at the roundabout.
You really need to watch when you pull out.
Some do their signals wrong and some do none;
and some are more intent upon their phone.

Some on the right - but turning left instead.
And vice versa! Or going straight ahead!

‘WHAT PRATT TAUGHT YOU TO DRIVE?! YOU FLIPPIN’ TWITS!’
‘WHOEVER DID, YOUR DRIVING IS THE PITS!’

At this rate I won’t make it there at all...
road works again! What moron made that call?
The umpteenth lot today! Some council dunce!
Why do they always do them all at once?

Stone me! That guy in front just jumped the light!
And the one behind him! It isn't right!
In London when the traffic lights go red
it means 'well... just another four' instead.

At last I'm moving well - first time today.
But now it's safety cameras all the way!
With them, congestion charge and tunnel tolls.
All that and still there's nothing but pot-holes!

Well here I am at last at B&Q.
I'll park right up the back.....that space will do!
Park right at the end, that's my golden rule,
so I don't get my door dinked by some fool.

But though there's miles of space around me now,
some twit will park beside me anyhow.
A mile of space, but they park here instead!
Sometimes I wonder what goes through their head.

Well now to get back home - right here we go!
What now? Some geriatric going slow!
I'd better call the wife - say I'm arriving.
At least I haven't had her back seat driving.

O no! I don't believe it! Christ alive!
Some selfish twat has parked across my drive!
That's it! I've had enough of all this fuss.
Next time I go, I'd better take the bus!

NO LIKEY PIKEY

The Emerald Isle's our proper place,
but here we are - right in your face!
They didn't stand for us back there;
against the law, but they don't care!

The U.K. on the other hand
obeys daft laws they cannot stand;
those E.U. laws which say that you
can't stop us doing what we do.

So watch out! If we're in the mood,
we'll stop by in your neighbourhood.
We'll break in at the dead on night
and park on some illegal site.

The police and courts won't do a lot
to try to shift us from our spot,
'cause if we're moved on from our sites
we'll just demand our 'human rights'.

Meanwhile we'll play the same old tricks.
We'll tell old folks we need to fix
their roofs and cheat them from their cash.
They pay up front and then we dash!

Then we'll go tipping on the fly,
or 'tapping up' the passers-by;
selling heather (begging to you).
Or thieving, 'cause we do that too!

We don't pay in, but take, take, take
and buy nice cars with what we make.
We get nice caravans as well
(though some are nicked, but please don't tell).

Our kids wreak havoc, in the schools.
We take the police for ruddy fools.
They let us by, though they can see
we've got no tax or M.O.T.

And when at last, we condescend
to leave and let your nightmares end,
you'll have to clear the mess we've made.
And we'll go, all expenses paid.

But don't get too excited, though,
to see us pack our bags and go.
Before you get over the moon,
please note: we'll be back sometime soon!

VERBAL ABUSE

Our language.... to mankind our greatest gift!
The lingua-franca used across the world.
Well I hope those Johnny foreigners are miffed;
fair payment for the insults they have hurled!

It's only right they suffer 'same as us!
Our crazy rules should be enough to rile 'em!
When English formed, logicians missed the bus,
and lunatics were running the asylum!

Spelling? Made it up as they went along!
Pronunciation? Really quite absurd;
what's right this time another time is wrong!
The past tense? Different case with every word!

But vengeance has been served. Enough's enough!
Let's start again and this time, don't play rough!

AWAY WITH THE FAIRIES

The things I've read have left me I'll at ease;
a hundred thousand drowned near Christmas Day,
an infant with some horrible disease,
a tumbling church killed those who went to pray.

Whilst evil people prosper, purses full,
the good die young, or living, suffer still.
Yet we are told that God is merciful
and everything that happens is His will.

Priests tell us God must move in cryptic ways.
But they don't understand. They can't explain
why children die and why the hell crime pays,
why joy is brief, but grief and hurt remain.

If God exists, which I sincerely doubt,
His door sign says 'GONE FISHIN'. 'SORRY'. 'OUT'.

THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Pull hard at his shirt, if he's faster than you,
or just trip him up, if the still makes it through.
If he gets a free kick, then hold up the play;
stand over the ball and then don't move away.

At corners do bear hugs, as though you're in love.
If he wins the header, then give him a shove.
Argue the toss, 'though you're as guilty as sin,
'cause anything goes just as long as you win.

But if he should touch you, go down in a heap,
and ham up the acting - so really dig deep.
Then chase the officials and have a good moan.
With luck and good acting, a card might be shown.

If late in the game, a boot knocks you flying,
waste time, roll about and make out you're dying.
But don't take your knocks like a man with good grace,
get vengeance with elbows! Right into the face!

Behave like a yob. You know - cheat, swear and spit.
If some club pays you more, then just do a flit.
At the end of the day you've got nothing to lose,
so long as you're sporting the finest tattoos!

Suspended? Not playing? Get plastered all day.
Or wind up 'inside' for assault or affray.
And if the fans turn and you can't keep them sweet,
get swiftly suspended through some stupid tweet.

And then, when you've wasted your best playing days,
get work as a pundit - all you need's the clichés!
Or there's a good living from bribes (more's the pity),
just go fill your boots on the FIFA Committee.



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TIPPING POINT

Take planet. Heat a century or two.
For this car fumes are very good indeed!
Add blind leaders that haven't got a clue.
Season the mix with pure, unbridled greed.

Burn down the trees that regulate the air.
Ignore the boffins, they don't know a lot!
Just go ahead and lay rain forests bare,
then leave to stew as weather goes to pot.

Soon both your polar ice caps will be lost,
and so they won't reflect the warming sun.
The oceans warm and melting permafrost,
releases carbon gasses by the ton.

All this will make your planet heat some more.
The oceans die, as acid levels rise,
then carbons freed up from the ocean floor,
release more gasses. Then the wildlife dies.

Finally, rain forests, desiccated,
burn down and send more gasses to the sky.
Sit back and watch the mess that you've created;
your job is done. Just watch the planet fry!

Now once the chain reaction is released,
it's started with no way you can reverse;
not once you reach the tipping point at least.
From here on things will go from bad to worse!

And where's the tipping point? Well, no one knows.
We may still have another year or two.
There's not much time to act before she blows.
I'd rather we got started, wouldn't you?



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

BAH! HUMBUG!

It's Christmas soon. O Goody, I can't wait!
Excuse my sarcasm - I'm not a fan.
Just seeing lots of people that I hate
and having to embrace my fellow man.

Buying gifts that I really can't afford;
things that they mostly didn't want or need,
going to parties where I just get bored
or drunk - and sometimes very drunk indeed!

Giving Christmas cards like they're confetti,
to people that I see most every day,
so they won't think I'm really mean or petty.
Well actually, I am! But please don't say!

The restaurants just overcharge for food
and all the pubs are packed from wall to wall.
What's on T.V. is never any good
and people all go crazy at the mall.

You eat too much - and just because it's there!
Then afterwards you've put on half a stone.
The charities appeal - as if I care!
We're promised snow - though every year there's none.

The Christmas lights won't work - same every year!
Although they worked just fine, the year before.
The vulgar excess, fuelled by crates of beer,
the carol singers begging at the door.

And no one that I know can even stand
that Christmas fare - a thing I can't abide.
Mince pies and Christmas pud should all be banned!
And why should we love nuts just at Yule tide?

And all the things I want to do are shut.
Even Christmas football's always ropery.
The politicians (they can kiss my butt)
do 'Christmas cards' - they must think we're dopey!

There's nothing on TV when I get home;
The Queen's speech or a sermon from the Pope,
some old repeat that's still in monochrome,
or an omnibus of some obnoxious soap.

And what about the drunks? - they're everywhere;
unless they're all lined up at A&E,
or at the office having an affair
with someone from Logistics or I.T.

But still - you've got the family to come.
You know... those uncles you can never stand...
show up and eat you out of house and home
then bugger off and never lend a hand.

Your brother's brats; they nearly wreck the place,
the old folks - all they ever do is moan;
your in-laws that insult you to your face,
your kids that only hit you for a loan.

But even if you try to get away,
the hotels think their golden goose has landed.
Train drivers always strike for higher pay.
A whiff of snow and all the planes are stranded!

Just make it stop! I pray. No more! No more!
Old Scrooge deserves not stigma but our praise!
Charles Dickens has a lot to answer for...
by showing him the error of his ways.

Just when you think it's over and you're free;
from boozing, bingeing, spending - endless pain;
the mindless excess and the gluttony,
it's New Year's Eve. Well, here we go again!

DEATH AND TAXES

The government is very often lax
with corporations fiddling their tax.
You'll never face the dock at the old Bailey
if you are rich or own a national daily.

And party leaders that should put things right
are doing it as well, just out of sight!
The parties all depend on fat cat donors,
so they won't bite the hands of wealthy owners.

And Google, Starbucks, Facebook and eBay
find loopholes so they never have to pay.
The taxmen make them sweetheart deals instead,
whilst quaffing chardonnay and breaking bread.

And, bankers are of course above the law.
They find all that legality a bore;
not when a juicy bonus is at stake!
Even with all the losses that they make.

They've grown so large that they're too big to fail,
too big to sanction and too big to jail.
Four scandals! Not one prosecution still!
Though caught red handed, fingers in the till!

They gamble big but they don't care a bit,
'cause if they lose, the public takes the hit.
But on the other hand - if they should win,
they keep the lot. Well isn't that a sin!

But government has set the hand of doom
on humble folk who have an extra room.
They'll move them to some place that better fits,
or failing that just cut their benefits.

And those that scrounge and make a dodgy claim,
though it's small beer, get hammered just the same.
One rule for the rich, another for the poor!
Well what do you think that party findings for?

Meanwhile, the ruddy country's in a rut.
Our people die as hospitals are cut,
the army's on its knees - not fit to fight
and front line service fades before our sight.

But never mind! Don't make this heavy weather.
Remember this: 'we're all in it together!'



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

THE PORTRAIT

Another night in lonely shade.
I ached again, where once we played
in tender joys; when we were one.
I ached for you. I ached alone.

But through the mists at last you came.
You called me softly by my name,
then held me as the teardrops fell.
With gentle words you cast your spell.

And soon we were as long before
in golden days that are no more.
The days when you were all in all;
before you slept beneath the pall.

But nearing now the ebb of dreams
the morning broke. Its dancing beams;
like sunlit waves above my head.
I reached for you across the bed.

But fading through the misty shroud,
you clawed the air. I cried out loud.
Though fading still, I heard your call:
“Look to the portrait on the wall!”

A drowning man with nothing left;
in hopeless waking; twice bereft,
I cursed the gods that in their play;
should only give, to take away.

Beyond all hope now in despair;
foregoing sleep and food and care,
I made my vigil by your shrine;
still waiting for some word or sign.

A thousand days (or was it one?)
and yet I lay there still as stone.
And now for all the world it seemed
I had but slept. I had but dreamed.

With spirit crushed, and body spent,
my soul engaged its long descent;
I tumbled down, I tumbled on,
I tumbled to oblivion.

But by some final act of will,
I stretched my hand out tumbling still.
I touched your portrait, called your name...
And then you came. And then you came.



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

THE WAY

Seek sage counsel and never cease to learn.
Persist, though you may fail at every turn.
Do those things first, that firstly must be done.
When in full view, then glitter like the sun.

When times have changed, adapt and change thereto.
Plan well for the important things you do.
And plan again for what may go awry.
Take no risks that you cannot justify.

Deal with your faults; enhance what you do well.
When problems come, prevent, contain or quell.
Reward good turns. Remember kindly acts.
In all things follow, reason, sense and facts.

Leave no loose ends - they'll hurt you in due course.
Waste not your chance, your time nor your resource.
Make large your plans but mind the little things.
Do not despair whatever fortune brings.

Seek prospects in the problems that arise.
Make friendships with the capable and wise.
Know your chance and seize it when it's there.
When lightly making enemies, beware.

In conflicts, leave the option for a flight;
your foe as well, lest they should turn and bite.
When things go wrong, then learn from your mistakes
and do not make them twice for heaven's sakes!

Be flexible and bend - but bend like steel.
With honest folk, be honest when you deal.
If you can do these things and do them right
Then you'll succeed and you'll sleep well at night.



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

DOWN THE TUBES

What is it now? Wrong leaves across the rails?
Or some poor beggar, fallen on the track?
Not signals, yet again! It never fails!
It's always when I'm late. Give 'em the sack!
That shower! They're not worth a flipping light!
Can't even get the blooming signals right!

It looks like this means war! The knives are out.
Self-preservation, that's the way it's done!
It's 'dog eat dog' when trains are up the spout.
Don't yield an inch! Look out for number one!
Wait! A message....can't hear a thing they say.
Not sure he's speaking English anyway....

"Dee treens to bzzzz and bzzzz is runnin' slooo"
"Best cheenge to plutfarm bzzzz und goo fram theer"
What did he say? I haven't got a clue.
If he said 'go', I think I'll stay right here.
Their information's always pretty duff.
You watch! They'll send us back here soon enough.

I knew it - there's a train just coming through!
Right! Find a little woman....stand right behind...
yes, over there! That titchy one will do.
They push and shove the most, I always find.
It's not P.C. to say, but still it's true.
I'll follow in her wake and get right through!

That did the trick! And now to get a seat...
Decision! Now, shall I dash left or right?
There's just one left! It looks like a dead heat.
It's just that guy and me... now for a fight!
Well, maybe not.... that guy looks pretty mean!
Just back awaytry not to make a scene...

OK, plan 'B'. I'll just stand over there,
right by the window at the very end.
At least that way I'll get to breathe some air.
I'll stand and read my book and just pretend;
make out that I don't care if seats come free.
But if one does, its MINE, you wait and see!

So...now to keep an eye out for a paper...
I wonder if she wants hers anymore?
I don't know...it's always such a caper!
I never know the way to do this chore.
To subtly move and slip it into reach?
Or ask up front and then look like a leech?

No, Focus. The seat! Just stick to what you know!
Now check the people sitting all around...
You read the type and work out when they'll go.
That city guy...he'll take the Overground,
the Asian will get off near Forest Gate.
It's Barking for the Pole, at any rate.

That's sorted then. The city guy is first.
So when he moves I'll be right there to spring.
Go steady now! Don't make it look rehearsed.
He's getting up! OK! Now do your thing!
It's mine all mine! This seat was heaven sent!
He's even left his paper! What a gent!

That seemed a bit too easy....let's take stock.
That guy bedside's begun to twitch and mutter.
A seat one that no one wanted! What a crock!
I think I've sat beside the village nutter!
Why is it always me? My face, that's why!
Remember! Just don't look him in the eye...

What's that they say? They're going to stop the train?
And chuck us off at Upney! That's not fair!
They'll stop it short and send it back again!
So now I must vacate my hard-earned chair.
They've messed it up again back down the line
and I must wait outside and watch the sign.

Well, here I am. I've reached my stop at last.
There's no one at the gate. Oh what a pain!
The turnstile's bust! So now I can't get past.
Looks like I'll have to jump the gate again.
Well, maybe not. They've left an open wicket.
So people can get out without a ticket!

Just one more push and I'll be clear away....
So much for this performance. What a fuss!
You wouldn't want to do it every day.
Now here we go again! This time, the bus!
And they're another lot that like to tease.
You wait all day AND THEN THEY COME IN THREES!



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

AT A LOSS

The Labour Party thinks it's great
when everything's run by the state.
The Tories think that that's unwise
and so they like to privatise.
And in the middle stand Lib. Dem.
But people rarely vote for them!
The S.N.P. don't care one jot,
unless it's all run by a Scot.
Then U.K.I.P. won't make much ado,
so long as things are not 'E.U.'.

Poor old Joe Public's at a loss,
'cause either way it makes him cross.
All state-run things are in a mess;
the police the schools the NHS,
where no one ever gets the sack
unless they get their jobs straight back.
That's once the golden handshake's paid.
And 'gold hellos'! - they've got it made!

But 'private' on the other hand...
a bunch of cowboys take command
and try to bleed the public dry.
Their service poor, their prices high,
their fat cat bonus still paid out
though water's short and trains are out.
When prices fall they keep the lot
and infrastructure's left to rot.

So what on earth are we to do?
Well don't ask me - I've not a clue!

FLIM-FLAM SPAM

That ruddy phone! Why must it always ring
right when you just don't need it? What a pain!
I'm in the bath or football's in full swing...
or underneath the car...drives me insane!

A 'courtesy call' they say. What a lie!
It's timeshare or some other flipping scam,
or some horse's ass pushing P.P.I.
Whatever! I just couldn't give a damn.

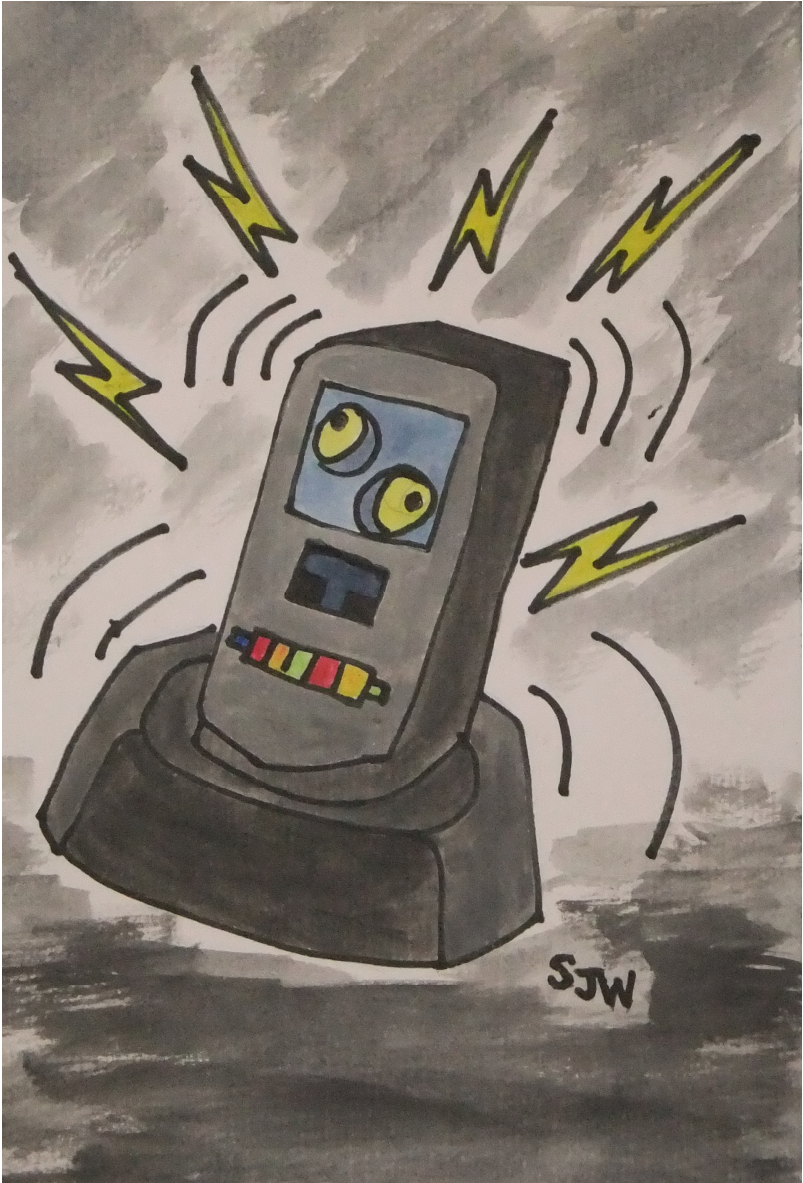
Worse still, when there's no bugger on the line!
And how did they ever get my number, eh?
I must have ticked some dodgy box online
and now I'm bugged from Delhi to Bombay.

I've tried to shut them out. I told BT.
But that's no use. Not when it's from abroad.
Tried OFCOMeven wrote to my MP.
But it's no use. The legislation's flawed.

As if the landline wasn't bad enough,
they text my mobile with some old flimflam!
My mailbox too, with viruses and stuff.
Then there's the spyware trojans, worms and S.P.A.M.

I've had enough of them and all their tricks.
So, what do we do to make them disappear?
Nothing a nuclear strike or two can't fix,
India first...then Spain and North Korea!

Well, maybe that's a bit over the top...
but only just! Oh this is such a bore!
The only other way to make them stop
is pigeons, bongo drums or semaphore!



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

LOW FLYING

Oh joy! That ruddy time of year again!
Time to take a break in God knows where;
to forsake my nice TV and cosy chair
and toddle off to some hell-hole in Spain.

What's that you say? I'll have a lovely rest!
You must be joking! Travel's such a bind!
All hassle! If you can't see that, you're blind.
When I go overseas I just get stressed!

First to pack, and all that I need, I swear,
is some T-shirts and some flip-flops - that's the lot!
But then SHE packs! A ton if it's a jot!
And then she says she's not a thing to wear!

So now you face the flipping motorway.
And then the airport parking. What a con!
At check in, where a queue goes on and on!
Those plonkers at the front take half a day!

You board - after the security ordeal,
but there's no space above - now that's not fair!
Some selfish sod took more than his fair share
with outsized bags - enough to make you squeal!.

And then he puts his seat back in your face
and so your legs are crushed from chair to floor.
And then the fat guy sitting right next door,
spreads over and you sink without a trace.

So then they serve the drinks - some nice hot teas....
perfectly timed to hit the turbulence!
You'd think by now they'd have some better sense.
But no! And so you spill it on your knees.

And don't even start me off about the food!
They even have the gall to make you pay!
'Prepared by a famous chef' they always say.
If that's true then my name is Robin Hood!

At last we land and go to 'Baggage Claim'
to find our cases smashed or overdue.
Or lost. Or they've been sent to Timbuktu!
And so you're stuffed - and no one takes the blame.

And after this, the thing I really hate;
you find the desk to claim your hire car
and hand on heart they swear it's up to par.
But then you find it's just the same old crate!

And so to your hotel - but that's not right.
You find the room is not the one you booked.
Your reservation just got overlooked
and so you're view is just a building site.

Complain all you like- and ask to see the boss,
and tear with gnashing teeth the flipping rug.
But they just do the same old Gallic shrug
and say 'manana'. ... They don't give a toss!

Next day, down by the seaside promenade,
you see the Brits behave like lager louts -
except of course, for bloody timeshare touts
who'd sell their mums as long as they get paid.

So back at blighty after much ado,
you get pulled up and quizzed by immigration.
Adding insult to your consternation,
they let the likely suspects all pass through.

At last you make it home, jet lag and all.
You got the flu. That damned re-cycled air!
Your dodgy tan is making people stare,
and but for that, you really had a ball!

Your food is stuffed - the freezer did not freeze.'
Your Cable box went down - 'Did not record',
You've put on weight - the diet's by the board!
Your mobile phone ran up huge roaming fees.

'Enough!' You cry - 'it's driving me insane!'
'I'll throw away my passport - stay right here!'
But give it time; it takes about a year,
and then you go and do it all again!

STEEL SKIES

When steel skies frown on hills of stone,
and bare trees loom like dungeon rails.
When winds howl 'Doom' in ghastly wails
and thunder cracks like broken bone.

When all I do is count the cost
and all my truths have failed or fled.
When all life's fairer hues are shed,
revealing nought but what is lost.

When the malice of the season
hangs thick its gall in sullen air,
my sick heart moves me to despair
and hope seems shorn of higher reason.

Then there unfolds a brighter dream,
that faith and will may yet redeem.



Photograph taken near Hawaii by Steve J Waterfield

A LOT TO SWALLOW

When you go out dining you're cooking your goose!
You book it online - a meal out with the boys.
Then when you arrive, you've been stuck by the loos,
or women half plastered and making a noise.

You booked well ahead, but still they're not ready
and so you end up standing there in the wings,
with some gizmo that hoots. So you hold it steady
and watch it intently and hope that it rings.

The waitress comes over and says 'hello guys',
and somehow it grates you, this fake, Yankee phrase.
Under the table... the crumbs and the fries!
It looks like it hasn't been swept out in days!

She wipes down the table right into your lap.
You order some drinks; some wine or some beer.
But all that they sell is that cheap I-Tie pap,
or plonk that's pretentious but still far too dear.

The drinks take an age. You try catching their eye.
But somehow the waiters go deaf or go blind.
You wave, and you stare, but they still hurry by,
or go into hiding; some place you can't find.

The beer is served cold, but not so the glasses;
hot food warms up plates that are cold as the night.
You would try to gripe, but such a time passes
before they enquire if the food is alright.

You asked for 'well done', but the steak is still rare.
You told them 'no dressing' - but they still put it on!
The bread hasn't come and the salt isn't there.
You asked them for sweetener. They say there is none.

You add up the bill. Great! You haven't been caught.
We chip in. As always the total's askew.
You chip in again, but the money's still short.
Your friends 'have to dash' so now it's down to you!

You still have that voucher. Well, heaven be praised!
It grants you a discount to save you a bit!
You read the small print! It says 'No Saturdays'
and so it is useless and you take the hit.

They ask for a tip! Now let's take it steady!
Well, this is quite cheeky. They're trying it on!
What? Though they've charged you for service already!
You're paying them twice. Oh, this place is a con!

Enough is enough! This has pushed you too far!
Just look at the liberties they went and took.
Next time you'll just spend the whole night in the bar.
Or if all else fails, you must learn how to cook!

A PAIN IN THE ARTS

They lord it over us, the art elite;
they say what we should view, should wear, should eat.
An unmade bed or pile of bricks is art;
a sheep's head in a case is really smart.

Poems without beauty, form or meaning,
films no mainstream cinema is screening,
nouvelle cuisine - just tiny scraps of mush,
all make pretentious critics beam and gush.

But no one tells the king he has no clothes!
And no one says what everybody knows.
So we just shrug and let it all alone
and watch true culture sinking like a stone.

And still they stand, whilst better taste departs;
They just don't know their elbow from their arts.



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

LOVE'S ETERNAL SHORES

O come to me my love, in radiant white;
for you are fairer than the evening star,
and yet more lovely than the summer night,
whose winds bring rare enchantments from afar.

And let me hear your voice, whose dulcet charm
brings music to the long enraptured air.
Your tender words of love will then disarm
the longing that has been my one despair.

Then give to me your pledge with rings of gold;
eternal gold; that like your constant heart,
makes timeless bonds to cherish and to hold,
through every trial that fortune can impart.

So join with me in this, our holy place
and let me take the hand I so desire.
Then, as the veil is lifted from your face
I'll seal our sacred vows with lips of fire.

Then all that's mine shall be forever yours
and we'll embrace on Love's eternal shores.

*Written and read for the wedding of my friends,
Roger Last and Camilla Sören.*

Borlänge, Sweden. August 2013.



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

LOVE'S ETERNAL SNORES



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

Please make it stop! I can't take it any more;
those endless nights, when she begins to snore!
First it starts with a low-key grumbling growl
and then it builds to some almighty howl.

I've tried everything I know. A timely kick
or shove you might surmise, would do the trick.
A brief respite, then it just changes key
and louder still! O how shall I be free?!

No more 'Mister Nice Guy'! The gauntlet's down!
I'll put a poisonous snake inside her gown
or plant a bomb right underneath the bed
or use a bag to cover up her head.

No. Forget all that. I've tried it all before!
'Cause nothing works when she begins to snore.
Now my only hope's the internet.
I'll browse the web. It's never failed me yet.

And wait! At last! A trick to get my way!
But if you want to know I'll never say.
What do you take me for, some foolish duffer?
And then I'd be the only one to suffer!

At last I'm free! At last I'm off the rack!
But what's this now? Her knee's jammed in my back!
And now she's pulled the covers all away!
And where she's shoved her toe I dare not say...

Oh what's the use! I'll never get some rest.
I'll have to end it all. It's for the best.
I'll slash my wrists, or take a load of pills.
A well-aimed shot, they say, can end all ills.....

But one last thing to do...it's not too late.
I'll warn the world to save them from my fate.
Above the door I'll write 'BEWARE THE DIN'.
'ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER IN'.

A SEA OF TROUBLES

They smile at you when first you get aboard
and smile again whenever you should meet.
But what's behind the smiles? They can't afford
to look depressed, although they're just dead beat.

Not when their jobs are hanging by a thread.
Just one false step and they'd be cast aside.
Their folks would starve. So they just smile instead
and finish all the work before the tide.

It's bitter sweet this holiday, for me;
to see them work so hard for little pay,
whilst I enjoy a life of luxury,
the sun the sea, a new port every day.

But what if I could say 'no more of this!'
The cruise to end, the staff all sent back home.
Back home to what? Hardly a life of bliss!
And maybe here they're luckier than some.

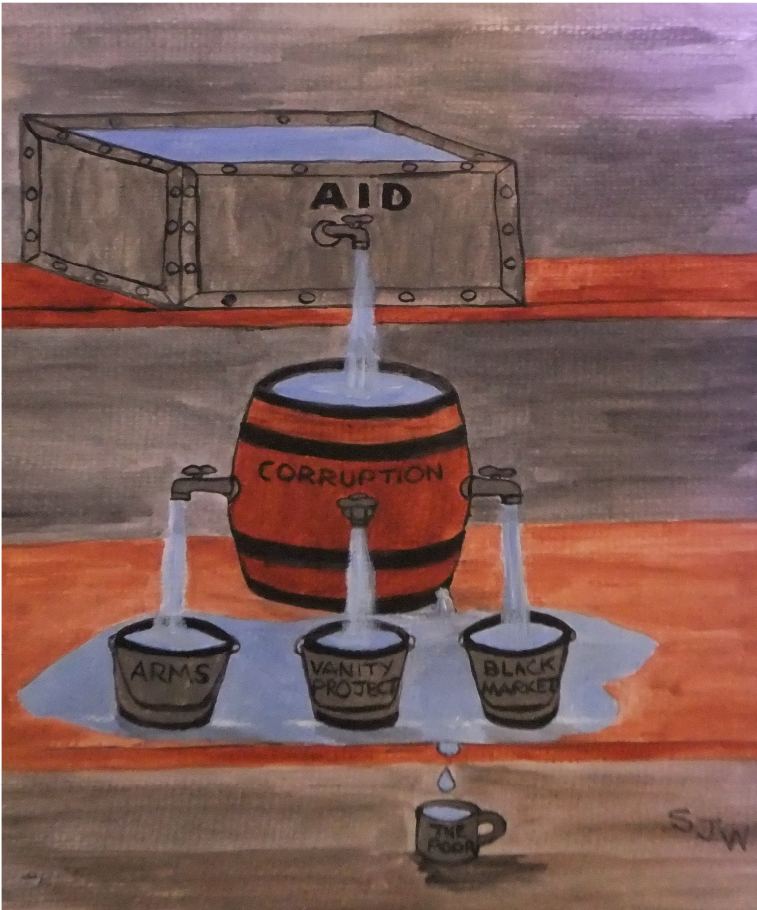
So then I ease my conscience with a tip;
something to give their folks some better days.
But all I do is subsidise the ship;
the more I give, the less the liner pays.

These days you can't do right for doing wrong!
To save the planet we recycle clothes.
In Africa and they're going for a song
and so the local factories have to close.

We send free food so people there might eat
and so the local farmers there are starved.
The farmers in their turn admit defeat
and soon enough the food supply is halved.

We make enormous gifts in foreign aid
but all we do is fuel corruption there.
The poor don't see a dime, the rich get paid
and only the arms dealers get a share.

A tricky thing these days, this doing right;
to live life well and still sleep well at night.



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

THE ESSEX MAN



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

'Hi Dave! How are you? Haven't seen you in years!
Still doing the horses and swilling the beers?
You're doing quite well if appearance tells ought!
Is that a Mercedes you've just been and bought?
You must be the head of some large company!'
'No nuffint' like that - I'm on social'' said he.

'But those chains round your neck - they're real, solid gold,
and sovereigns galore; worth a fortune if sold.
And that snazzy suit! Those are really nice threads!
You live in a penthouse with four double beds,
whilst I'm in a terrace and drive a Capri!'
'That's 'cos yer don't fiddle', he giggled with glee.

'And is that a Rolex you have on your wrist?
That tie from the Golf Club! I'm really impressed!
Especially since you were kicked out of school,
then spent time 'inside' and went straight on the dole
But how are you living in such finery?'
'Say nuffint' he said, it's a bit iffy 'see!'

'Stop kidding! I bet you did night school like me
and worked your way up the professional tree.
I have to pay tax at exorbitant rates,
(But can't get support when I need from the state).
'Too rich to exempt but too poor to slip free.'
'Jus' find a loophole and yer don't pay none, see?'

'You mean all my strivings and struggles are vain?
Whatever I earn they take from me again,
then give it to you, when you break every rule!
You can't read and write, but it's me that's the fool!
There must be a way out of this lunacy!'
'Yeah. Down at the breaker's yard - workin' for me!'

FORTY TWO

Why is there something instead of nothing?
Why are infinities of different size?
From whence does the quantum flux come frothing?
From lifeless matter, how can life arise?

In a world of change, what is it to be?
First this, then that, but still somehow the same....
If nature's causal, can our will be free?
With no free will, then who is there to blame?

And why is nature so numerical?
And numbers so fine tuned for us to thrive?
Is the universe flat or spherical?
Why is pi three point something? Why not five?

Please say, what is the root of minus one?
And why does time just go a single way?
If life is out there, where is everyone?
Is time eternal? Will it end one day?

Well, if you know the answers tell, please do.
So far the best I've got is forty two!



Hubble image. Mystic Mountain. Painted by Steve J Waterfield

FOUR BY FOUR

If you are upset that your manhood is small,
or you are a loser and want to walk tall,
then why not go large! Obtain the 'X' factor!
Be just like me. Get a nice 'Chelsea tractor'!

Or if you're incompetent: scared you might crash,
or want to be vulgar and show off your cash,
got latent aggression you've no outlet for?
Then what could be better? The old four by four!

As for that rot about carbon emission,
don't waste my time, I'm a man on a mission.
Save all that tripe for those leftie tree huggers.
I don't know what planet they're on! Silly buggers!

I park where I like. I don't care what it says.
My favourite spots are the disabled bays.
But sidewalks are good and the zigzags are cool,
or there on the crossing, right outside the school.

And watch out for me if you're riding a bike
or you're a pedestrian taking a hike.
'Cause I take no prisoners when I'm coming through
and let's face it son, I'm much bigger than you!

I hog all the road and I hog all the gas
and I'll see you dead, before I let you pass.
And let's make it clear, just in case of all doubt;
there's no chance in hell of me letting you out.

I push in at queues, cause I don't like to linger,
but don't say a word or I'll give you the finger!
My lights are too bright and my bumper's too high,
so if we should crash then it's YOU that will die.

But why should I care? 'Cause when all's said and done,
my only concern is myself. Number one!



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

TRUE LOVE

She tells me at length stuff that bores me to death,
but when it's my turn, then it's 'don't waste your breath'.
Whatever she's used, she won't put it away.
She rings when I'm busy, with nothing to say.

All over the house she leaves on all the lights.
Her snoring is certain to wake me a 'nights.
She will interrupt when I'm watching TV.
She still rings the doorbell, though she's got a key.

If she wants a thing, it must be 'right away',
but if it's for me then I'm waiting all day.
When she doesn't listen and makes a right mess,
who has to sort it? Well, I'll give you one guess.

When there's something special that I want to do,
she'll put on the kibosh. She's always on cue.
If she's in a shop then the thing she'll demand
is hardest or dearest or never to hand.

If I need some quiet she bugs me all day.
She will beg to differ with all that I say.
She spends all the money that I scrimp and save.
But if I get angry she still won't behave.

If I paint a room, then she'll wait till I'm through
and say 'changed my mind, now - I don't like that blue!'
She loves back seat driving - it drives me insane!
So let's not mince words - she's a right little pain!

And yet I still love her, despite all her ways;
whatever she does and whatever she says.
She's my trusty sidekick, my very best friend.
It's true, even though she drives me round the bend!

Nigh on forty years and I've not wrung her neck.
And if that's not love, then what is? Flipping heck!

AGE CONCERN

There I was, right there, standing on the train.
She smiles at me. And then she smiles again.
Smiling at me! And speaking with her eyes!
She smiles once more and then she starts to rise.

I say to myself 'you've still got it man!'.
'She's after you. Looks like you've got a fan'.
But when she speaks she brings me down a treat.
For then she goes and offers me her seat!



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

DECLINE AND FALL

Let millions in without a clue
of where they'll live or what they'll do.
Let criminals serve half their terms.
Let hospitals run rife with germs.

Let drunks run riot at all hours.
Make useless police that have no powers.
Run national debts we cannot pay.
Let P.C. take free speech away.

Let crooked bankers make us bleed.
Let kids leave school that cannot read.
Send soldiers to some pointless war,
who don't know what they're fighting for.

Give hand-outs to the rich and greedy,
whilst only food banks help the needy.
Cut everything but foreign aid,
so venal tyrants still get paid.

Put workers on starvation pay.
Let Eurocrats have all their way.
Let zero hours contracts waive,
our rights and make a man a slave.

Make sure the ruling class is narrow;
the 'old school tie' from Eton, Harrow,
with private health and education
and plum jobs right across the nation.

Cut welfare for the ones who paid,
whilst spongers still have got it made.
Let lawyers pushing human rights,
prove night is day and black is white.

Let British workers miss the bus,
with jobs for anyone but us.
Let loan sharks pray upon the poor.
Have borders with an open door.

Destroy our green and pleasant land
with concrete jungles badly planned.
Make sure the rules are so relaxed
that feckless businesses aren't taxed.

Restrict press freedom just in case
they try to put you in your place.
So do all this and when you're through
you've done what Hitler could not do.

You've now betrayed our hope and trust.
and ground our nation to the dust.
But never mind! You're sitting pretty!
You've got a nice job in the city.



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

BEYOND A DISTANT SHORE

There is a place beyond a distant shore;
beyond the rim of earth and arc of sky,
where we shall be together you and I,
in tenderness and joy forevermore.

And we will take the sun and drink the wine
and while away the long and happy hours.
Our nights shall be of dreams and days of flowers
and I'll be yours and you'll be always mine.

This parting then, is but a brief sojourn
until we slip away time's flimsy bond
and trade its rags for all the joys beyond;
to grasp our bliss and never to return.

How could it end for us, this love we save?
It lives beyond the shadow and the grave.

Dedicated to Thomas and Dorothy Rump



Tom and Dorothy Rump Painted by Steve J Waterfield

STICKS AND STONES

You can't say this, you can't say that...
You can't call anyone a Pratt.
Not even if it is dead true.
Its defamation and they'll sue!

The term 'Red Indians' is out.
But 'cowboys'? - still in with a shout,
unless they're builders (see above).
Now it's 'First Nation' we approve.

To say 'he's coloured' was alright,
but now it's very impolite.
And 'Chinky' - that was not so bad,
but now it's making people mad.

Can't say a referee is 'foreign'.
Can't rib a Scot about his sporran.
Must call a Gipsy 'traveller',
Though staying still's what most prefer.

What do you do to be polite?
We never seem to get it right.
Rules change as soon as they are made,
yes, thanks to our P.C. brigade.

Then Irish jokes are out these days.
And what of lesbians and gays?
Well I'm not sure ...the jury's out.
So best say nothing when in doubt.

And what if I get called 'Kafir'?
Is that a jibe? Maybe, I fear.
That's lingo I don't understand.....
so it's OK- it won't be banned.

In my view, I think we'd better
to not hold strictly to the letter,
and give ourselves a bit of slack
instead of always biting back.

Why not just take it on the chin?
A few harsh words are no great sin.
So maybe it's just 'Sticks and Stones'.
Much better that, than broken bones!

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LANGUAGE

I thought 'man, get some *kudos*...learn Ancient Greek,
then you could read the true Homeric verse'.
I went to the *Academy*, every week,
got verbs to learn and declensions to rehearse.
But after all the *myriad* books I've read,
I can't speak one *iota*. That's it.... 'nough said.

Maybe not.....it's *cathartic* to share my pain!
That *cryptic* language! It's such a huge impost!
The genitive, I disown it!....'does my brain!
The dative? That is when and where I get lost.
The nominative? Please, do not subject me!
From genders? May god (he or she) protect me.

Accusative? - I object to that all day!
The vocative? Hey! I can't tell you a lot!
The transitive? I just want to move away.
The locative - really puts me on the spot.
And the thirty-odd definite articles!
They nigh on reduce my brain to particles!

No wonder those ancient Greeks were *mega* smart;
took *philosophy* and *drama* to their peak
and left such brilliant *history* and art.
'cause You had to be a genius just to speak!
O the *trauma* and *stasis*! I'm no Greek-er!
What's that? They're two Greek Words! Well then, *Eureka*!

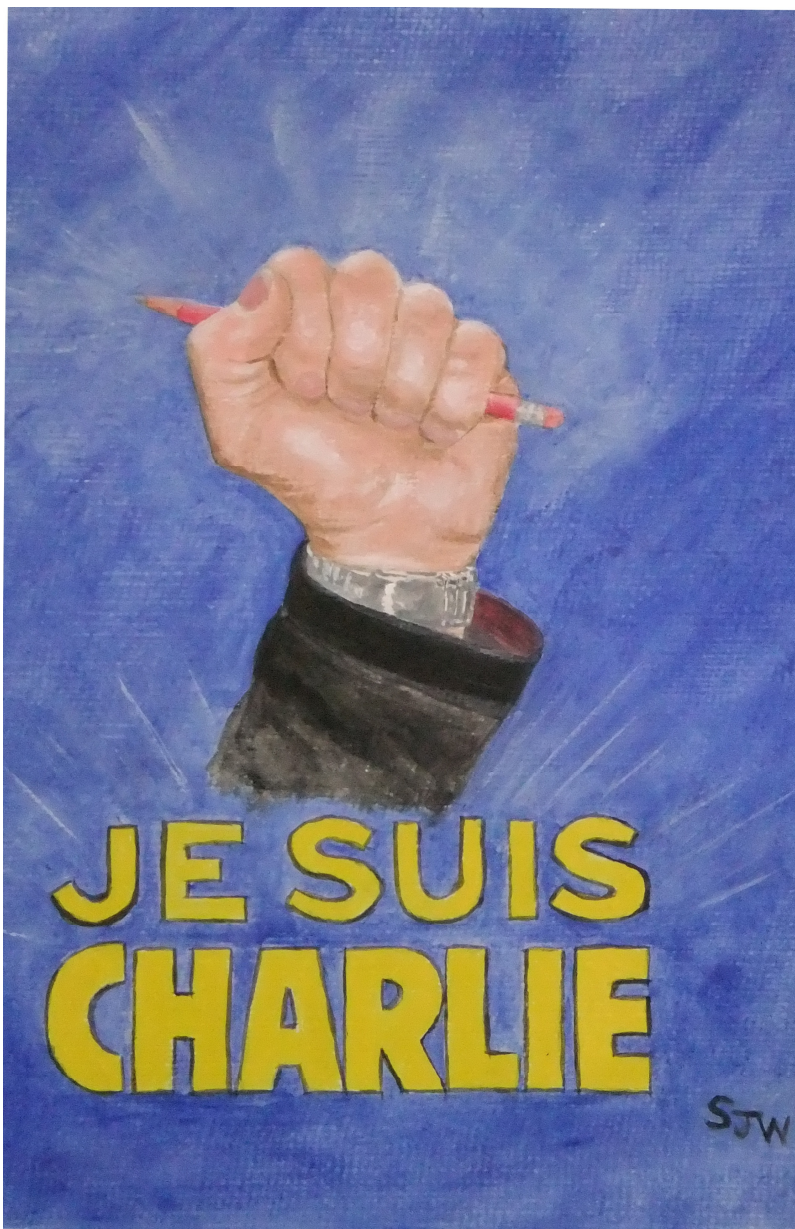
JE SUIS CHARLIE

Are you still living at home with your mum?
And is the internet your only chum?
Are you out of work? A proper loser?
No girlfriend? Still you'd only abuse her!
Are you a homophobic? Misogynist?
Add all the world religions to that list.
You hate them all and send them all to Hell!
Well actually you hate yourself as well.

Then I know what's the only life for you!
Join I.S.I.S. and we'll make all your dreams come true!
You get to feel real big - a proper man!
You get to kill as many as you can,
to lord it over weak, defenceless folk;
cut heads off now and then - just for a joke,
rape little girls that you have made your slaves.
Now that's the way a jihadist behaves!

And then you'll go to heaven - Insha'Allah!
With thirty virgins and a flashy car.
'Show mercy and you'll get some mercy too',
the prophet says - and so it must be true.
But never mind - taking the lives you took
is sacrilege according to your book;
that holy book that teaches peace and love!
Blow that! Just read the bits that you approve!

Just one more thing - and this may give you pause.
One day you'll be a martyr for the cause.
What comes around, soon goes around they say.
Yes, you'll get yours as well! Roll on the day!



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

BIKKIES: A TRILOGY. 1 THE BIKKIE-HOLIC

Right now, that's it! No more bikkies for me!
Though I do love one with my cup of tea;
one or two that is....OK.....maybe three.
But now I'll put them under lock and key.

It's bikkies that's at fault for my large frame!
Tea without a dipper? Just not the same.
My bum's too big and Peak Freans are to blame!
McVitie's too, if I have to name the name.

But anyway, now that's all in the past!
I'll break their spell and give them up at last.
I've made my mind up and I'm holding fast...
stood firm and nailed my colours to the mast.

So that's it then! My bikkie days are done!
Now for some tea! Shortbread? Well..... just the one...



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

BIKKIES 2: THE WIFE'S REPLY

How dare you call me fat, you lazy slob!
Call yourself a writer? Go get a job!
Any more insults that you want to lob?
There's better men than you not worth a bob!

And next time that you insult my behind,
that phrase of 'pots and kettles' comes to mind!
'Cause if you think you're slim you must be blind!
If in a glasshouse, best shut up, you'll find.

When you're the one who's 'eaten all the pies',
you'd best retract your calumnies and lies.
Big butt indeed! That wasn't very nice!
You'll need a dentist soon, take my advice!

What's that? Would some new trinket make amends?
Come here my love, let's hug and we'll be friends!

BIKKIES 3: HIS SCHMOOZING

Oh come to me, my little chickadee!
Did I give some offence? Well, Lord bless me!
If so then hear me out. I'll make my plea.
You've just misunderstood - you wait and see!

Artistic truth was what I wrote, that's all;
a tiny error-ette; a dodgy call;
something that's just a little off the wall.
So really, there's no need to start a brawl.

Your youth's a legend and your beauty too!
It's praised from London Town to Timbuktu!
Call me a slimy snake if it's not true.
You want a diamond ring? No please, take two!

Will that suffice, then to smooth things over?
Good! Then once again we're all in clover!

JANUARY THE 8TH (HAIKU)

Only a carved stone.
Only some scattered flowers.
But how my tears flow.

Dedicated to my mother, Grace Waterfield



Grace Waterfield Painted by Steve J Waterfield

GNOTHI SEAUTON

‘Know thyself!’ The oracle once stated.
Wise words indeed, which I’ve ruminated
on so many times, but to no avail.
Such an array of mysteries assail
the mind; identity time, change and being.
They send me looking, but never seeing!

Being comes through change. And time mediates.
But what is ‘time’ that alters all our states?
Perhaps it’s just a construct of the mind.
Maybe our histories are not consigned
to oblivion; gone without a trace,
but are extant still in some other place.

Did time begin? And if so when and how?
Through quantum flux? A wrinkle in god’s brow?
Can it reverse? Run fast as well as slow?
In each brief moment’s change we undergo
a little death only to be reborn;
a little older and a little worn.

To live is but to grow, and growing, change.
But changing, we must die. For thus we range
from what we were to what we have become.
And so the paradox of life strikes home;
that living we must die and dying live.
Whence we depart, we presently arrive!

Shakespeare wrote thus, if I recall aright,
‘That to ask why day is day, night is night
and time is time is to waste time nights and days.’
But you’ll forgive me if I paraphrase.
Saint Augustine said that he knew quite well
what time was, until he was asked to tell!

When I observe a picture from my youth,
I see the contradictions in this truth.
Am I still that rash, small boy of yesterday?
'Not small, nor boy' at least, I hear you say!
Different, but the same, still him, now me;
with bonds of common thought and memory.

Is that then what I am, this chain of thought?
Is this the verity I've so long sought?
No. Memory is flawed; a murky haze,
that's much rose coloured by the march of days.
And thinking is much changed as we grow old;
so timid now, whereas in youth, so bold.

Heraclitus was right, though now long dead.
'Nothing is permanent but change' he said.
And in the Rubayyat they seemed to know:
'Like water we come and like wind we go'.
So true. But what of all that's in between?
It seems the truth of that remains unseen.

Thought, it seems, is a tyrannic master;
paying nought, though I work harder, faster.
It is an unmitigated miser,
to leave me older, yet none the wiser.
It seems I shall not catch this butterfly.
So here I'll lay my net and pass it by.



Delphi Painted by Steve J Waterfield

SLEAZY-PEAZY

It's really a bind if you went 'public school',
if you're quite a rogue and a bit of a fool.
What path can you take? Try cheating at poker?
Try running a bank? Or be a stock broker?

Then there's the Policeno, they're too working class!
Or there's Public Service....just sit on your arse
and get a fat pension- a knighthood as well.
Or maybe a lawyer - they're dodgy as hell!

No, there's but one way for a fellow like me;
I'll stand for election - become an MP.
It ticks all the boxes...a paid life of crime!
I'll fiddle expenses and lie all the time.

I'll make lots of promises I'll never keep
and fool all the voters. They're just stupid sheep!
No matter what party; it's only a game
It's just a career and we're really the same.

I'll take large donations from lobbying groups;
so laws that control them have got lots of loops.
And boards of big business will give me a place,
so long as I'm sure to fight hard for their case.

And then if at last, when the voters get wise,
and kick out my butt, I'll have 'fingers in pies';
some quangos perhaps?....no, not crooked enough.
Brussels more likely, with my nose in the trough.

Then once I've extorted all that I can get;
I've ruined the country and tripled the debt,
and taken all honours my country affords,
I'll top my career with a place in the Lords.



Painted By Steve J Waterfield

THE CHANNEL DASH

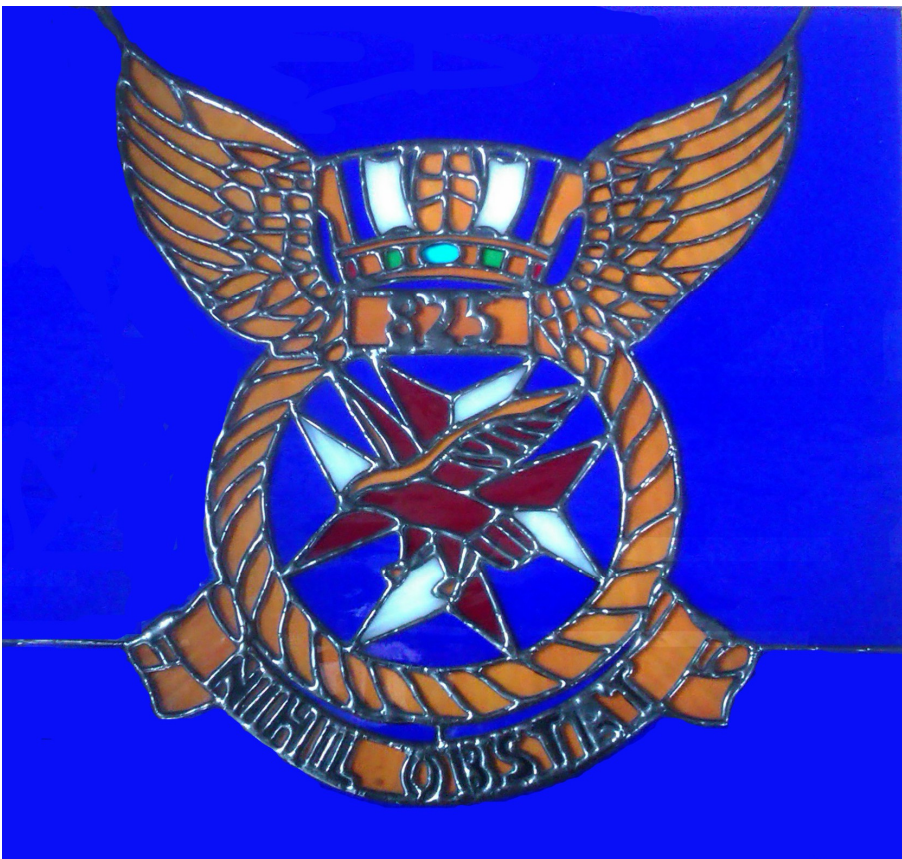
'They shall not pass' the distant order said.
'Though men must go where angels fear to tread'.
And so they rose to meet their fate; their gods;
their desperate courage pitched at fearful odds.

Friendless, alone, they rushed upon the wind,
casting their tattered shreds of hope behind.
Their duty only this: to do and die;
to face the fiend and meet him eye to eye.

To face the fiend and give him steel for steel,
with hearts of oak against the iron heel,
through white-hot skies, the angry waves beneath,
to dash themselves against a wall of death.

And so they flew. And so they gave their all;
few to survive their bitter duty's call.
But they bequeathed a mighty legacy;
a thankful nation happy, fair and free.

*In commemoration of Operation 'Cerberus' - also known as
the 'Channel Dash' 11 February 1942.*



825 Squadron Stained Glass Window made by Steve J Waterfield

TEARS BEFORE BEDTIME



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

A thousand people marched today
to tell the world of their dismay -
a cartoon drawn that's quite taboo
(freedom of speech to me and you).
The western act of making fun
of everything beneath the sun,
does not sit well with their tradition
of ignorance and superstition.

Apparently no word was said
when they cut off a soldier's head.
What did no harm to their convictions?
Slavery and crucifixions,
the children murdered in the street,
and players beaten on their feet!
They did not rise in moral rage
at people burned inside a cage.

I'm told that many of their kind,
maintain a much more open mind.
If so, this shy, retiring crowd
should voice their consternation loud.
Thus far a deafening silence rains,
which makes me think, despite the pains
of their many apologists
that moderates do not exist.

Who hates the Jews? The Moslems do.
Who hates the Hindus? Yes, them too.
Who hates Atheists in the main?
Who hates the Christians? Same again!
Who hates the apostate and gay?
and who hates what free thinkers say?
Who holds women in contempt?
And other Moslems aren't exempt!

How sad would be their ancient sires,
who built such minarets and spires,
who saved the wisdom of the past,
whose poetry was unsurpassed,
whose medicine outdid the best,
whose algebra inspired the West.
whose writings on astronomy
revealed the stars to you and me.

Those days are gone. And what remains?
Misguided liberals take pains
to tell us not to criticize
the ignorance that we despise.
To tolerate intolerance?
Can that be right? No, not a chance!
I for one do not agree.
Tears before bed, just wait and see.

DAD

Last time I saw you, you were fading fast
and fighting hard with life, to end your days.
But you rallied for a moment, heaven sent;
a moment bitter-sweet that quickly passed;
when we held the child you loved before your gaze.
Then you smiled and held her hand and looked content.

You stroked her tiny hand, squeezed it once more,
then gave a tired wave as you lay down.
You closed your eyes and faded into sleep,
gave up the fight and passed the final door.
With such an end; your spirit gently flown,
I had no cause to grieve, though some to weep.



Fred Waterfield Painted by Steve J Waterfield

DODECALOGUE

You must not hate, nor teach the world to hate.
The ways of others you must tolerate.
Cause no one pain, and those that suffer, heal.
You shall not swindle, cheat, defraud nor steal.

Speak truth - unless there's virtue in your lies.
Do not bully, threaten nor terrorise.
Oppress no one, but make their burdens light.
Care for your child and teach them what is right.

Respect the old and show them every care.
Preserve the earth and all that breathe its air.
Only use force with life and limb at stake.
Give to the world and do not only take.

Then live your life in honour, joy and grace
and you will leave this world a better place.



Hubble: Helix Nebula. Painted by Steve J Waterfield

THE POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY

“O to be wise, wouldn’t that be great!” I said
So I bought a pile of books and read and read.
But the more I read, the more confused I got,
as none of the greatest minds could hit the spot.
Some would say this, but the others would say that.
Schrodinger kept going on about a cat
“Maybe it’s alive or maybe it is dead,
It depends if you should chance to look” he said!
Then there’s the Quantum and Relativity
Both dead right - except the theories don’t agree!

For Wittgenstein it’s in the words that you say.
For Hegel, its change, at the end of the day.
Kant? He just lived in an ivory tower
and nobody understands Schopenhauer!
Marx said that you should look after your brother.
Freud says it’s all about sex with your mother.
Heisenbergwell, he could never be quite sure.
Gekko wants more greed and to hell with the poor!
Nietzsche held that only the strongest should rule.
And Hitler concurred. But then he was a fool!

For Plato all life’s just a shade on a wall,
but Socrates says we know nothing at all.
But how did he know that we know all that then?
So he was wrong too, though ‘the wisest of men’.
Epicurus tells us to drink from life’s cup,
whilst Seneca thinks you should give it all up.
But Seneca was hypocrite, for sure;
the richest of men telling us to be poor!
‘Life’s brutish and short’ - that was Thomas Hobbes’ line.
But note that he made it to age eighty nine!

Now Descartes, it seemed, hit the nail on the head,
for 'I think, therefore I am' he brilliantly said.
But Descartes, this cannot be right, I fear!
Politicians don't think, but they're all still here!
And maybe my mind's the cryptic invention
of some strange machine in a far dimension!
Machiavelli taught dissimulation!
So his acolyte, Blair lied to the nation.
Procopius feels life is just what we make it.
Confucius tells us lie down and take it.

Darwin maintains evolution's the key.
Creationists don't. Maybe one day they'll see!
Leibnitz says truth must have rationalisation
and Popper says lies must have falsification.
J. Bentham says do what is best for the most,
but what if the 'most' screw the rest of the host?
Old Occam exhorts 'keep it simple you fool!'
But life's never simple, I find, as a rule.
Wise Murphy tells us that things always go wrong
at the worst place or time and not before long.

And what of religion? I tried that as well,
but it's full of guff about heaven and hell.
That Catholic guilt would drive me round the bend.
The bible's no good - he just dies in the end!
I read the Koran but it's full of bluster...
can't hack all the gods that the Hindus muster,
So much for the shed loads of books I have read!
This wry erudition is doing my head.
This quest for great wisdom just gives me the hump.
For future advice I'll just ask Forrest Gump!



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

THE LAW'S AN ASS

Crime just doesn't pay - or so we're often told.
But that's just a 'porkie' - a pup we've been sold.
The odds don't stack up, if you think it right through.
Reports don't get made - so there's no more ado!

Or old 'Uncle Bill' really can't give a toss;
they write up your case and then you bear the loss.
Or if just for once they up and pursue it,
they pinch some poor sap, they know didn't do it!

And if by some marvel, the villain is 'copped',
they can't make it stick and the charges are dropped!
Or if the sleaze shows the judge his repentance,
An A.S.B.O is all, or suspended sentence.

But if the 'tea leaf' is not very canny,
and gets himself busted one time too many,
he'll do some time 'At Her Majesty's Pleasure':
three meals a day and a fine life of leisure!

Then (feel free to laugh or you'd just have to cry),
his time is discounted ! Nobody knows why!
Or in open prison, he serves out his time,
from whence he returns to his old life of crime.

And heaven forefend we encroach on his rights;
we turn off his X-Box, or leave on the lights!
We might have to cough up huge compensation
with complements of the proud British nation.

Do-gooders in droves help him bear with his plight,
but nobody cares if the victim's alright!.
In no time at all he gets let out of the 'Nick'
once having been taught every last thieving trick.

He's sure to be back - as in time they all do.
You can't make it up...but don't laugh- it's all true!



Painted by Steve J Waterfield

A SLICK, SICK, TRICK

A pub in heaven. Two drunks drink and sit.
The first one, God slurs out 'It'shh your round Jeezzz!
What sha' we do for laughs? Let'shh think a bit....
I know! I know! I've got thishh brilliant wheeze!

Let'sh make the world industrialise apace,
make it depend on one thing.....let's say.... crude!
Then put the crude in shome outlandish place,
where folks are vicious, backward, nashty, rude.

Then sit back here and watch the feathers fly!'
'Dad, that's brill. I know some perfect places!
They cut off heads and hands and crucify
and make the women cover up their faces'.

'And better still whilst all the other lands
must strive and work their fingers to the bone,
this lot get rich just sitting on their hands,
then take the lions share when all is done!'

'What was its ruddy name? My mind is cloudy....
use word association... shady...shoddy...
Hang on a mo'. That's it! The name is Saudi!
That's just the place we need, or my name's Noddy!'

'Right Jeez, you're on! This is my besht trick
since I made the church and all its schisms!
The Plague was good, yeah, all those people sick!
And war! And crime! And all the other 'isms!'

'Religion was your best, dad, for my money.
Those prophets teaching different faiths to hate!
And what a laugh! The land of milk and honey
given to all to fight over! That was great!

‘Well, OK Dad, I’ll sort this out tout suite!
Shall I invite old Lucifer to watch?’
‘Yeah, call him up. He’ll want a front row seat.’
‘Any other things that we can botch?’

‘Not right now, my son, I’ve had a skin full!’
‘Me too Dad! Well, I think I’ll hit the sack.
And don’t fret that folks will think we’re sinful,
I’ve got a plan to throw ‘em off the track!’

‘It’s called ‘the holy war’, ‘Jihad’, ‘Crusade’.
You murder, thinking only you are right
and all your deeds in heaven are repaid!’
‘Shhounds like a plan. I’m off to bed. G’night!’

EPITAPH

I've read the finest words set down by pen,
been moved to rapture by great symphonies.
I've shared the deepest thoughts of wisest men,
and gazed in wonder at the starry skies.

I've helped my friend when life has cast him down
and tried to save the world whilst men stood by.
With love and pride my little ones have grown,
and as they've taken wing I've watched them fly.

I've loved the earth and the made its joys my own;
roamed in the sun and felt its golden beams.
But sweeter than the greatest joys I've known;
I dwelt with you in love's eternal dreams.

So I'll not dread the silent shadow's fall,
For I can say of Life.....I had it all!



Hubble Light Echo. Painted by Steve J Waterfield



Steve J Waterfield. Self Portrait

MY POETRY IN OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Bah! Humbug!

submitted to It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year . Forward Poetry. Deadline 31/12/14

The Portrait

Submitted to Love is in the Air. Forward Poetry deadline 27/3/15

Love's Eternal Shores

An Ode To... published 31/7/2014. Forward Poetry.

Age Concern

submitted to Flash Fiction . Forward Poetry. Deadline 27/3/15

Beyond a Distant Shore

submitted to Sonnets For Shakespeare. Forward Poetry. Deadline 27/3/15

Dodecalogue

submitted to A Year Gone By, Forward Poetry deadline 31 DEC 2014

ILLUSTRATIONS

Front Jacket: Painting from Hubble Photograph ‘Stephan’s Quintet’.
Page 2 Jackie Waterfield Painted by Steve J Waterfield.
Page 7 Sunset Beach inspired by internet photo of unknown provenance.
Page 8 Road Rage
Page 15 Taking a Dive. inspired by internet photo of unknown provenance
Page 17 Tipping Point.
Page 21 Death and Taxes inspired by internet cartoon of unknown provenance.
Page 23 The Portrait. Inspired by internet photo of unknown provenance.
Page 25 The Way based on a photo by Steve J Waterfield. The Ridgeway.
Page 28 Down the Tubes.
Page 31 Flim Flam Spam.
Page 35 Steel Skies. Photograph taken near Hawaii by Steve J Waterfield.
Page 37 A Pain in the Arts. Inspired by internet picture of unknown provenance.
Page 41 Romantic Shore. Inspired by internet picture of unknown provenance.
Page 42 Love’s Eternal Snores.
Page 45 A Sea of Troubles.
Page 46 Money Grabbin’ Git.
Page 49 From Hubble image. Mystic Mountain.
Page 53 Age Concern. Inspired by TFL image.
Page 51 Four by Four.
Page 55 Decline and Fall.
Page 57 Tom and Dorothy Rump.
Page 61 Ju Suis Charlie. Inspired by internet picture of unknown provenance.
Page 62 Bikkieholc.
Page 64 Grace Waterfield.
Page 67 Ruins at Delphi.
Page 69 Sleazy politician.
Page 71 825 Squadron Badge. Stained Glass Window. Made by Steve J Waterfield and donated to the Hurricane and Spitfire Museum, Manston, Kent.
Page 67 Hubble: Helix Nebula.
Page 72 Protest. Inspired by internet photo of unknown provenance.
Page 75 Fred Waterfield.
Page 79 The Thinker. Statue by Auguste Rodin.
Page 81 The Laws an Ass. Inspired by internet photo of unknown provenance.
Page 84 From Hubble image. Light Echo.
Page 85 Self Portrait.
Rear Jacket: Lake Tahoe. A photograph by Steve J Waterfield.